



The Michigan Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons

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Medical Marijuana in Michigan

The Michigan Medical Marijuana Act was voted into law on November 4, 2008. Administrative Rules were introduced on April 4, 2009. The law allows for the protection from State, but not Federal prosecution for the medicinal use of marijuana.

The law cites research from the National Academy of Sciences IOM report from 1999. This report "has discovered beneficial uses for marijuana in treating or alleviating the pain, nausea, and other symptoms associated with a variety of debilitating medical conditions." This report only mentions two specific conditions that may meet this criteria; "such as chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting and AIDS wasting".

The following criteria for conditions were recommended:

- Short-term use (< 6 months).
- Failure of approved treatment.
- The symptoms are likely to be quickly relieved.
- Administered under supervision that allows for effectiveness to be monitored.
- Involves oversight such as an institutional Review Board.

Glaucoma was considered, but did not meet any of the above criteria. The new law defined nine (9) specific "debilitating medical conditions" for which protection is afforded. Glaucoma is a specified condition under the law. Additional conditions are covered if they cause "cachexia or wasting syndrome; severe and chronic pain; severe nausea; seizures, including but not limited to those characteristic of epilepsy; or severe and persistent muscle spasms, including but not limited to those characteristic of multiple sclerosis".

The Michigan Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, the National Eye Institute, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Medical Association and the Michigan State Medical Society -- based on the best scientific evidence available, do not support the use of Medical Marijuana for patients with glaucoma.

The American Glaucoma Society is an organization of ophthalmologists specializing in the treatment of glaucoma. Their Board produced a position statement on August 1, 2009, stating that "although marijuana can lower the intraocular pressure (IOP), its side effects and short duration of action, coupled with a lack of evidence that its use alters the course of glaucoma, preclude recommending this drug in any form for the treatment of glaucoma at the present time".

Michigan law has inappropriately included glaucoma as a condition that may benefit from medical marijuana.